



M000 General Preparation Standards

M010 Mailpieces

## M012 Markings and Endorsements

**Summary** M012 describes the standards for markings, endorsements, and placement on First-Class Mail, Standard Mail, and Package Services. It also covers the placement of endorsements for delivery services and ancillary services.

### 1.0 MARKINGS—BASIC STANDARDS

**Class and Rate** Except for single-piece First-Class Mail, mailpieces must be marked under the corresponding standards to show the class of service and/or rate paid:

1.1

- a. Single-piece First-Class Mail may be identified under [M110](#).
- b. Presorted First-Class Mail and Standard Mail must be marked under [2.0](#).
- c. Package Services must be marked under [3.0](#).
- d. Priority Mail must be identified under [E120](#).
- e. Periodicals must be identified under [E211](#).
- f. Express Mail is identified with the Express Mail mailing label (Label 11 or Form 5625) without any other required class or rate marking.
- g. All mailable hazardous materials must be labeled and/or marked as required in [C020](#).

**Enclosures** Enclosures, attachments, and mixed rate mailpieces must be marked under the applicable standards in [E070](#), [M070](#), and [P070](#).

1.2

**Printing and Designs** Required markings may be printed by a postage meter, special slug, ad plate, or other means that ensures a legible marking. A marking may not include or be part of a decorative design or advertisement.

1.3

### 2.0 MARKINGS—FIRST-CLASS MAIL AND STANDARD MAIL

**Placement** Markings must be placed as follows:

2.1

- a. Basic Marking. The basic required marking that indicates the class or subclass—"First-Class," "Presorted Standard" or "PRSRT STD," or "Nonprofit Organization" (or "Nonprofit Org." or "Nonprofit")—must be printed or produced as part of, or directly below or to the left of, the permit imprint indicia, meter stamp or impression, or adhesive or precanceled stamp.
- b. Other Markings. Other rate-specific markings ("AUTO," "AUTOCR," "Presorted" (or "PRSRT"), "Single-Piece" (or "SNGLP") (First-Class Mail only), "ECRLOT," "ECRWSH," and "ECRWSS" (Standard Mail only)) may be placed in the location specified in [2.1a](#) or, if the marking appears alone or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except postal optional endorsement line information under [M013](#) or postal carrier route package information under [M014](#), then it may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address. If preceded by two asterisks (\*\*), the "AUTO," "AUTOCR," "PRESORTED" (or "PRSRT"), or "Single-Piece" (or "SNGLP") markings also may be placed on the line directly above or two lines above the address in a mailer keyline or a manifest keyline

or placed above the address and below the postage in an MLOCR ink-jet printed date correction/meter drop shipment line. Alternatively, the “AUTO,” “AUTOCR,” “PRSRT,” or “SNGLP” markings may be placed to the left of the barcode clear zone (subject to the standards in [C840](#)) on letter-size pieces.

- c. Additional Requirements for Carrier Route. “AUTOCR,” “ECRLOT,” “ECRWSH,” and “ECRWSS” (Standard Mail only) must appear in their entirety wherever placed, except “ECR” may be placed in the postage area if “LOT,” “WSH,” or “WSS,” as applicable, is placed in the line above or two lines above the address, as specified in [2.1b](#).

## Exceptions to Markings

### 2.2

Exceptions are as follows:

- a. Automation Letters: Non-carrier route First-Class Mail and Standard Mail letters do not require an “AUTO” marking if they bear a DPBC in the address block or on an insert visible through a window. Non-carrier route First-Class Mail letters not marked “AUTO” must bear both the “Presorted” or “PRSRT” and “First-Class” markings. Non-carrier route Standard Mail letters not marked “AUTO” must bear the appropriate basic marking in [2.1a](#).
- b. Automation Flats: First-Class Mail and Standard Mail flats do not require an “AUTO” marking. First-Class Mail flats not marked “AUTO” must bear both the “Presorted” or “PRSRT” and “First-Class” markings. Standard Mail flats not marked “AUTO” must bear the appropriate basic marking in [2.1a](#).
- c. Manifest Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece as required in [2.1a](#). The two-letter rate category code required in the keyline on manifest mailing pieces prepared under [P910](#) meets the requirement for other rate markings (e.g., on a First-Class piece mailed at automation carrier route rates, the “AC” code may replace the “AUTOCR” marking).
- d. MLOCR Prepared Automation Letter Mailings. The basic marking must appear in the postage area on each piece as required in [2.1a](#). The other “AUTO” marking described in [2.1b](#) must be replaced by the appropriate four-character marking described in [P960](#) on those pieces that have the marking applied by an MLOCR. This four-character marking provides a description of the postage payment method and the rate of postage affixed for metered and precanceled stamp mail or other postage information for permit imprint mail.

## 3.0 MARKINGS—PACKAGE SERVICES

### Basic Markings

#### 3.1

**[4-5-01]** The basic required Package Services subclass marking—“Parcel Post” or “PP,” “Bound Printed Matter” or “BPM,” “Media Mail,” or “Library Mail”—must be printed on each piece claimed at the respective rate. (The marking “Library Rate” may continue to be used on Library Mail until January 1, 2002. The marking “Special Standard Mail” (or “SPEC STD”) may continue to be used on Media Mail until January 1, 2002.) For Parcel Post destination entry rate mail, the marking “Parcel Select” may be used as the basic required marking instead of “Parcel Post.” The basic required marking must be placed in the postage area (i.e., printed or produced as part of, or directly below or to the left of, the permit imprint indicia or meter stamp or impression). Optionally, the basic required marking may be printed on the shipping address label as service indicators composed of a service icon and service banner:

- a. The service icon that will identify all Package Services subclasses will be a 1-inch solid black square. If the service icon is used, it must appear in the upper left corner of the shipping label.
- b. The service banner must appear directly below the postage payment area and the service icon, and it must extend across the shipping label. If the service banner is used, the appropriate subclass marking (e.g., "PARCEL POST," "BOUND PRINTED MATTER") must be preceded by the text "USPS" and must be printed in minimum 20-point bold sans serif typeface, uppercase letters, centered within the banner, and bordered above and below by minimum 1-point separator lines. There must be a 1/16-inch clearance above and below the text.

**Package Services  
Indicators**  
Exhibit 3.1



**Additional Parcel  
Select (Parcel Post)  
Markings**  
3.2

Each piece in a Parcel Select (destination entry Parcel Post) mailing must bear a marking to indicate it was mailed at a destination entry rate. If the "Parcel Select" marking is used as the basic marking in the postage area on such pieces under 3.1, no additional marking is required because the "Parcel Select" marking identifies the mail as destination entry rate mail. If the "Parcel Post" (or "PP") marking is used as the basic marking in the postage area under 3.1, one or both of the following markings also must appear on each piece in the mailing to identify it as destination entry rate mail: (1) "Drop Ship" (or "D/S"); (2) "Parcel Select." These additional destination entry rate markings must appear in either the postage area described in 3.1 or in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone (i.e., if no other information appears on that line). The "Parcel Select" and "Drop Ship" (or "D/S") markings must not appear on Parcel Post mail that is entered at rates other than DBMC, DSCF, or DDU destination entry rates.

**Additional Bound  
Printed Matter  
Markings**  
3.3

Each piece of Bound Printed Matter mailed at a Presorted rate must bear the marking "Presorted" (or "PRSRT") in addition to the basic marking in 3.1. Until January 1, 2002, mailers may use the marking "Presorted Standard" (or "PRSRT STD"). Each piece of Bound Printed Matter mailed at a Carrier Route rate must bear the marking "Carrier Route Presort" (or "CAR-RT SORT") in addition to the basic marking in 3.1. These additional markings may be placed in the postage area as specified in 3.1. Alternatively, these markings may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone, or if no other information appears on the line with the



marking except postal optional endorsement line information under [M013](#) or postal carrier route package information under [M014](#).

**Additional Media Mail  
Markings**

3.4

Each piece of Media Mail mailed at a presorted rate must bear the required marking “Presorted” or “PRSRT” in addition to the basic marking specified in [3.1](#). This additional marking may be placed in the postage area as specified in [3.1](#). Alternatively, these markings may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone, or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except postal optional endorsement line information under [M013](#).

**Additional Library  
Mail Markings**

3.5

Each piece of Library Mail mailed at a presorted rate must bear the required marking “Presorted” or “PRSRT” in addition to the basic marking specified in [3.1](#). This additional marking may be placed in the postage area as specified in [3.1](#). Alternatively, these markings may be placed in the address area on the line directly above or two lines above the address if the marking appears alone, or if no other information appears on the line with the marking except postal optional endorsement line information under [M013](#).

**4.0 ENDORSEMENTS—DELIVERY AND ANCILLARY SERVICES**

**General**

4.1

The mailer must place the correct endorsement on each mailpiece to provide delivery instructions (retention period under [F030](#) or carrier release under [D042](#)) or to request an ancillary service (forwarding, return, or address correction under [F010](#)), subject to the corresponding standards for use and availability.

**Return Address**

4.2

A return address as presented in [A010](#) must be used and placed in the upper left corner of the address side of the mailpiece or the upper left corner of the addressing area. If the return address is a multiple delivery address, it must show a unit designator (e.g., an apartment number).

**Placement**

4.3

The placement of the endorsement on the mailpiece is determined as follows:

- a. The carrier release endorsement must be placed directly below the return address. If any other endorsement is used, the carrier release endorsement must be separated by the equivalent of one blank line of the type size used.
- b. A retention period specified by the mailer must be placed directly above the return address.
- c. Any ancillary service endorsement must be placed in one of these four positions:
  - (1) Directly below the return address.
  - (2) Directly above the delivery address area (which includes the delivery address block and any related nonaddress elements such as a barcode, keyline, or optional endorsement line).
  - (3) Directly to the left of the postage area and below or to the left of any rate marking.
  - (4) Directly below the postage area and below any rate marking.

**Other Physical  
Standards**

4.4

The endorsement or, if combined, endorsements must meet these physical standards:

- a. The type size of the endorsement must be at least 8 points.
- b. The read direction of the endorsement and return address must be the same as the read direction of the delivery address.



- c. The color contrast between the endorsement and the mailpiece background must be kept at a reasonable degree. A brilliant colored background or reverse printing is not permitted.
- d. A clear space of at least 1/4 inch around (above, below, and both sides) the total area containing the endorsement(s) is required. This 1/4-inch clear space is not required for an endorsement that is applied with a multiline optical character reader (MLOCR) inkjet and placed in the location directly below the postage area and any rate marking under 4.3c(4) if the endorsement is clear and legible.

**OCR Read Area**

4.5

Any printing (including an endorsement or return address) on upgradable letter-size First-Class Mail or Standard Mail must not interfere with the delivery address lines within the OCR read area defined in C830.

